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Dr. Harry Howe Ransom
Democracy vs. Defense

Tighter CIA Control Asked

Recent events in Viet Nam suggest that the controversial Central Intelligence Agency should be given more "external supervision" than it now has, a noted political affairs writer said here yesterday.

Dr. Harry Howe Ransom, author of a 263-page study to be published today by Doubleday & Co., said the policy dispute between U.S. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge and Saigon CIA chief John H. Richardson illustrates a need for unifying the objectives of the CIA and other U.S. agencies.

"Apparently President Kennedy's instructions to the CIA, informing it that it is subordinate to the ambassador in whatever foreign country it is working, are not being followed to the letter," Ransom said. He added:

"I WAS READING recently that an American ambassador in Latin America complained that the CIA was working at cross-purposes with the objectives he, the ambassador, had been given by the State Department."

...whose brand-new book "Can American Democracy Survive Cold War?" analyzes the impact of defense agencies on American democracy, said the CIA presently has two functions.

"It conducts underground para-military operations in some foreign countries and supplies secret information as well," said Ransom, associate professor of political science at Vanderbilt University.

"I question whether it is wise to combine these two functions in one agency. I would suggest putting the job of collecting information among the tasks of the State Department, meanwhile placing the CIA under the authority of the Department of Defense and confining its duties to those of para-military operations."

RANSOM said, however, that neither the Defense Department nor the State Department want to take these jobs upon themselves, because of their job of maintaining diplomatic contact with the foreign nations which might be involved. He added: "The CIA has an awful problem: Nobody loves it because it is a secret organization, and because it is a secret organization, it cannot defend itself against the charges of others."

"Can American Democracy Survive Cold War?" contains a long chapter on the CIA in which Ransom says:

"A strengthened Department of State is a prerequisite of putting intelligence into its proper place. It adds: "The government's intelligence system is so important that it should be left uncontrolled by any group outside the executive branch of the federal government."

RANSOM SAID he also favors the idea of a permanent, well-staffed joint congressional committee on central intelligence, which, he said, "might serve as a promoter and defender of the central intelligence system, while simultaneously guarding the public interest."

"Such a committee might be composed of chairmen and the highest-ranking minority members of the House and Senate committees on appropriations, armed services, government operations and foreign relations," he said.

Ransom said he feels that the Kennedy Administration realizes the existence of the problem, pointing out that there were many changes in the CIA's top ranks after the abortive invasion of Cuba's Bay of Pigs.

"BUT MY impression is that there has been no structural change and I feel that a structural change is necessary to any real solution of the problem."

Ransom said his new book's major theme "is that democracy as we know it requires a decentralized government, and uncensored press and foreign maneuvers which are always above-board—while national defense makes requirements which are in many ways just the opposite."

Ransom's first book, "Central Intelligence and National Defense," was published in 1958. He is also the author of many articles, published in the New York Times Magazine and various political science, international affairs and military journals.

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